C. L. Cosby

SEPTEMBER 1956

MONTHLY REVIEW

N INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST MAGAZINE

THE BOOM CONTINUES

THE EDITORS

POWER ELITE OR RULING CLASS?

PAUL M. SWEEZY

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY UNDER CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM

ARTHUR K. DAVIS

A Revolutionary Formula

ALEXANDER L. CROSBY

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MONTHLY REVIEW: Published monthly and copyright, 1956, by Monthly Review, Inc.
EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICE: 218 West 10th Street, New York 14, New York. Telephone: ORegon 5-6939.
MAILING ADDRESS: 66 Barrow Street, New York 14, New York. Address ALL communications to 66 Barrow Street.
SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: One year—$3.00 (foreign, $3.50); two years—$5.00 (foreign, $6.00).
By 1st class mail — United States $5; everywhere else $6.
By air mail — No. America $7; So. America $13; Europe $17; Asia $24.
EDITORS: Leo Huberman and Paul M. Sweezy.

NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

The July-August double issue, devoted to recent developments in the USSR, has turned out to be a big success. We expected extra sales and printed a thousand more copies than usual, but already by the end of July it was clear that this was not enough. Many readers ordered extra copies, and then newsstands and book stores began to re-order. Finally, we had to go back to press and run off 2500 more copies. This is the first time we have had to reprint in MR's more than seven years of publication. Apparently a good many readers agreed with the professor at one of the country's foremost law schools who wrote: "I thought your analysis of the situation in the SU, in the last issue of MR, was superb."

The galley proofs of the Review of the Month which we sent out in advance served to bring this analysis to many who are not regular MR readers, and it brought in a considerable number of new subs. We still have copies of this galley available, and now that we have reprinted the whole issue that is available too. May we suggest that you take advantage of this situation

(*continued on inside back cover*)

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THE BOOM CONTINUES

In our last analysis of the economic situation ("Boom, Bust, Depression," October 1955), we pointed out that the boom, which was then in a rather hectic phase, rested on two unquestionably shaky foundations: a rapid expansion of consumer debt, particularly for the purchase of automobiles and new houses, and a heavy volume of private investment of which a relatively large proportion was then going into inventory accumulation. Investment in plant and equipment (fixed investment) was rising only very moderately, and government purchases of goods and services were still declining from the peak reached in 1953. "What all this adds up to," we wrote, "is that since the end of last year [1954] American consumers have gone on a buying spree, plunging heavily into debt to finance the purchase of new houses, cars, household appliances, and so on; and that businessmen have caught the spirit, loading their shelves with materials and goods in anticipation of still more buying." In view of the obviously self-limiting nature of this process, we concluded that the stage was being set for a downturn which we thought might be rather sharp but which, because of factors that need not concern us here, we did not expect to be deep or catastrophic.

Subsequent developments have confirmed a part of this analysis. Between the first quarter of 1955 and the first quarter of 1956, residential construction declined about 10 percent, and the production of automobiles has been running well below last year's level (30 percent lower in the last week of July). Consumer credit (not including residential mortgages) has risen more slowly than in 1955. The inventory build-up continued through the first half of 1956, but by then some of it had become involuntary (backing up of goods in the hands of retailers and dealers) and much of the rest was in anticipation of the steel strike. At the time of writing, post-strike figures are not yet available, but there can be little doubt that the effect has been to check the accumulation process. Some replenishment in a number of industries will doubtless now take place, but there is no reason to anticipate any general resumption of the upward movement.

Nevertheless, there has been no sign of a downturn in the economy as a whole. And in view of the overall importance of automobiles and housing, this is certainly a surprising fact. How account for it?

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It is tempting to answer that we have to do merely with a time lag, that the general downturn will materialize as soon as the real situation has sunk into the prosperity-dazed minds of our economic lords and masters. And this may indeed be the case. At the same time, it is necessary to recognize that since last year at this time, certain new elements have entered the picture which open up at least the possibility that the boom has acquired a fresh lease on life.

One of these new elements is an upward change in the direction of government spending. Total government purchases of goods and services (including state and local), having reached a maximum of $84.5 billion dollars in 1953 (the last year of fighting in Korea), declined steadily to an annual rate of just over $75 billion in the first half of 1955. The upturn came in the third quarter of 1955 and has proceeded without interruption since. Moreover, the rising trend of government spending seems certain to continue in the visible future (for a summary of the latest facts and projections, see "Federal Spending Starts to Climb," *Business Week*, July 7, 1956). In retrospect, we shall probably see clearly enough that the widely hailed "reversal" of trend effected by the Eisenhower administration was merely a temporary after-effect of the Korean War.

But the increase in government spending has so far been relatively small (from an annual rate of $74.9 billion in the second quarter of 1955 to $77.4 billion in the first quarter of 1956), and this alone would hardly be enough to account for a changed economic outlook. The key development has taken place in the field of private fixed investment. In our October editorial, we noted that "the rise in business investment in plant and equipment has been moderate and, taken by itself, a relatively minor factor in the boom," and went on to draw the conclusion: "With most industries already burdened with more or less excess capacity, it seems only logical to expect a decline rather than a further rise in business investment, once the present boom psychology peters out or collapses."

Subsequent developments, however, have thrown considerable doubt on this conclusion. Not only did fixed investment rise rather sharply at the end of 1955, but reliable surveys made since that time have shown that business has very ambitious plans not only for this year (which up to the steel strike had been pretty generally carried through) but for the next few years as well. This whole matter is so important that it will be well to quote at some length from *Business Week's* summary of the latest McGraw-Hill survey, reported in the issue of May 19, 1956:

> Last year, business laid out an all-time record $30 billion for capital spending. This year, it will push that up to $39

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billion. And through the next three years it promises to keep on spending heavily. . . .

All business is planning to spend 30 percent more in 1956 than it did last year.

Manufacturing industries, the biggest contributors to the capital spending boom, are planning to spend 48 percent more this year than last.

Companies in almost every industry have been boosting their own ideas on future spending month by month since late last year.

Business is looking well beyond 1956, making preliminary capital spending plans for 1957, 1958, and 1959. The price tag on even these preliminary plans already exceeds 1955's old record of capital spending.

Industry is planning to spend much more on research and development. In 1953, research spending totaled $3.7 billion; last year, $4.8 billion. This year, it will reach $5.5 billion; and by 1959, it is scheduled to run to $6.3 billion.

This stepped-up research spending is expected to produce a flood of new products and to spark a 24 percent rise in sales in the next four years. By 1959, manufacturers expect to get 11 percent of total sales from new products—ones that didn't exist in 1955.

What all this adds up to is the news that capital spending, far from flagging as some have feared, is still gathering steam. . . .

There is no doubt that the sharply stepped-up fixed investment indicated in these figures is what is now fueling the boom. Moreover, hopes that the boom can be kept going rest largely on the continuation of fixed investment at a high level. What are the chances of such continuation?

For one thing, it should be emphasized that the investment plans reported by McGraw-Hill researchers are in no sense commitments. As A. A. Berle, Jr., put it in an interesting article in *The Reporter* ("The Recession We Should Not Have," June 28, 1956), they are mostly "still in the minds of boards of directors" and "nobody can change his mind quicker about spending money than a director who is not sure of the future." It would seem that we are confronted with the paradox that the future (for quite a while anyway) may be rosy if the plans are carried through, while if the future begins to look clouded and the plans are not carried through we are in for some rough economic weather. But this doesn't help us to decide whether or not the plans *will* be carried through. For that, we need to know more about what they are based on, why they have been revised upward lately, what calculations about the future of the economy are involved, and so on.

No one can really be sure of the answers to these questions, and

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given the unplanned nature of capitalism no one ever will be. Total investment figures are always a composite of what is done or planned by many firms, each acting on its own estimates, for its own reasons, and more or less independently. But we know some of the forces at work and can guess at others.

Certainly *some* of present and projected investment activity is based on overoptimistic expectations, which are the invariable by-product of a prolonged boom. For a long time now, productive capacity has been growing more rapidly than output, and the present spurt in investment will intensify the disparity. It is not possible to get exact data on the relative rates of growth, but some indication of the orders of magnitude involved may be gathered from *Business Week's* estimate (May 19) that "by the end of 1955, U. S. industrial capacity was 40 percent greater than at the end of 1950," while both Gross National Product and National Income grew by about 35 percent in the same years. This clearly points to the steady growth of excess capacity, a condition which indeed is obvious enough to all attentive observers of the American economic scene. "People were able to buy all they wanted of everything they needed this week," commented *Business Week* on July 28th, more than three weeks after the beginning of the steel strike, and then went on to point up the inevitable corollary: "This speaks well of industry's capacity to deliver goods. . . . Yet it raises a question: If we already have such capacity—enough to ride out a steel crisis—why rush to add so much more?" One answer is that businessmen always make that kind of mistake in a boom. Sooner or later the unbalance gets so pronounced in some industries that a reaction sets in, and this may be the beginning of a general contraction of investment.

This, indeed, *must* be the case unless there are other powerful forces operating to keep the level of investment up. The crash of 1929 can be most plausibly interpreted in this way: it was simply the consequence of long-continued overexpansion of capacity at a time when other forces operating on the level of investment were relatively weak. But it would be rash to assume that this pattern must now be repeated. The "other" forces appear to be far from weak at the present time, and we can't even be sure that they won't get stronger. Let us try to list the most important of them:

(1) A rapid rate of population growth and new family formation. It is difficult to know how much significance to attach to this factor. Economists have often pointed out that babies are not born with purchasing power and that it is effective demand that counts economically, not mere numbers of people. However, it has also been frequently noted that *if* businessmen invest on the assumption that the growing population will be able to buy their products, this

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will put more purchasing power in the hands of consumers and the assumption will tend to be justified. In the final analysis, it is a question of fact: to what extent do businessmen actually take demographic factors into account in making their investment plans? Business literature suggests that they do to an important and growing extent; and while a certain amount of skepticism is certainly healthy, we obviously cannot, in the present state of our knowledge, discount this factor altogether. It may well be a considerably stronger force tending to maintain investment today than it was in 1929.

(2) Special tax concessions to the big corporations, on the theory (or pretense) that such concessions are necessary to meet the needs of defense production. This has been a little-publicized but certainly not unimportant factor in the recent upsurge of investment. According to the Department of Commerce:

> An element favorable to investment in the recent period has been the sharp increase since the latter part of 1955 in the issuance of certificates of necessity under the government's program of rapid tax amortization. In an 8-month period ending this May certificates have been issued for facilities with an estimated cost in excess of $5 billion—*a half billion dollars more than had been issued in the previous 24 months.* ("Higher Investment Programed for Third Quarter," *Survey of Current Business,* June 1956, p. 4. Emphasis added.)

We simply do not pretend to know how much additional scope for stimulating investment there is through this technique of surreptitiously doling out public funds to the big monopolies.

(3) "Planned obsolescence." American business today is haunted by an ever-present fear that consumers will slow down their spending (and borrowing) and begin putting aside more money for their children's education and their own old age. (More than one observer of our national mores has commented on the comic contrast between our ideological devotion to and practical abhorrence of the virtues of thrift.) The fear undoubtedly has a very real basis: there is always at least a tendency for a newly established (or newly upgraded) household to pay off its debts, enjoy its new car and gadget-filled home, and start making regular deposits in the savings bank. But if this were to happen generally, the economic consequences would be disastrous. Quite understandably, a large and growing part of business energies and resources is devoted to forestalling this catastrophe. And this continuing campaign requires very large amounts of investment.

The campaign, of course, is waged on many fronts and with many weapons, but the aspect of it which seems most important in the present context has to do with what may be called "planned obsolescence." Not only must goods be made short-lived in the purely

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technological sense, but everything must be continuously changed so that there is always a new and more fashionable model on the market. And to make continuous changes requires continuous investment in new machines, jigs, dies, materials, and the like. The automobile industry furnishes the classic illustration of this sort of thing. We have already noted that 1956 has seen a big decline in the sales of autos, and one would naturally suppose that this would be reflected in a falling-off in investment. But not at all. The McGraw-Hill survey cited above found that the industry was planning to invest 82 percent *more* in 1956 than it had in the record-sales year of 1955, and in June the *Department of Commerce* (*op. cit.*) reported that "automobile companies appear to be holding to their planned billion dollar increase over 1955 even though sales are running below the apparent expectations of a few months ago." No single cause can explain this, but *Business Week* came up with at least a part of the answer when it recently wrote ("Detroit Learns a Bitter Lesson," June 30):

> Capital investment for expansion can slow down because increased capacity won't be needed for four or five years. The industry's capital spending figures may go up in the next two years—*but it won't necessarily be earmarked for expansion.* Styling will get even heavier emphasis. It is no longer possible to move the chrome and paint around, call it a new model, and expect it to sell with the leading cars. (Emphasis added.)

We are so accustomed to this kind of thinking that most of us have forgotten how utterly insane the system is that gives rise to it. Just imagine how much smaller the automobile industry would need to be if it were planned to turn out a relatively few models designed to last and to give the best and safest transportation service! How much less steel, nickel, chrome, and other scarce materials would be used up! And what a catastrophe it would precipitate if it were tried under capitalism! (Socialism *is* the only answer.)

(4) New methods of production, automation, and related developments. It is in this area that the decisive determinants of the present high level of investment are probably to be found. The fundamental aim, of course, is to cut costs (and raise profits), and here, as in the case of planned obsolescence, the automobile industry provides a good example of what is going on. Says *Business Week* in the report from Detroit just cited:

> With 1955's sky-is-the-limit optimism squeezed out of the industry, and the future market forecasts scaled down, it is natural that the motor-makers are taking a second look at their capital expansion plans.
>
> They are putting heavier emphasis on the idea of spending

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for the sake of saving: If you have to spend half a billion dollars for newer, more economical factories and equipment that will save you a billion dollars over a period of years—then you should spend it fast, they say.

All through industry, this logic holds sway. Quite independently of anticipated future sales, business is engaged in a feverish scramble to discover and install new and cheaper methods of production. And, as the figures on investment in research (quoted above from the McGraw-Hill survey) show, the resources of science are being pressed into the service of this aim as never before.

The facts appear to be that we are in the midst of a technological revolution of very far-reaching scope, and that this technological revolution is now the *dominant* factor in the whole economic situation. A high and even rising level of investment is a natural accompaniment.

(5) New products and new industries. These could quite logically be included along with new methods of production, and they are obviously facets of the same technological revolution. But there are differences which it is convenient, and sometimes important, to keep in mind. Atomic energy, for example, is more than just a new method of producing power: it embodies a wholly new concept of producing power, and its long-run effects—particularly in the backward, empty, or sparsely populated regions of the world—are likely to be enormous. On the other hand, it would probably be wrong to assume that atomic energy is exerting a big influence on the *present* level of investment in this country. (This naturally excludes the activities of the Atomic Energy Commission which come under the heading of government spending.)

In connection with the subject of new products and new industries, one or two further remarks may not be out of place. New products range all the way from the genuinely novel (for example, plastics and synthetic fibers) to the merely dressed-up old. Obviously, the former call for relatively more investment than the latter, but they all make their contribution to the demand for capital. As to new industries, it is often very hard to put your finger on them nowadays. When the automobile came along, a whole flock of new firms sprang up to produce it: the new industry was palpably there, organizationally, statistically, and every other way. But it doesn't always happen that way now. The corporate giants of today turn out thousands of different products, and new industries can be born (or old ones die) without even leaving a trace in the vital statistics of the business world. This external stability of the corporate system undoubtedly tends to mask the technological ferment that is going on beneath the surface.

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The foregoing is, of course, very far from being an exhaustive analysis of investment and investment prospects, but it may be enough to indicate the complexity of the problem and hence to serve as a warning against any dogmatic assertions about what is or what is not going to happen. Insofar as the present high tide of investment is based on such factors as overoptimism and special tax favors, it could recede at any time. But insofar as it reflects longer-range planning for a growing number of consuming units or is a by-product of the profound technological revolution through which the capitalist and socialist worlds are alike passing, it may well continue to run strong for some time yet. Since in actual fact all these factors and forces are at work, it is quite impossible to make any confident predictions about the course of investment over the next few months, let alone the next few years.

Given this uncertainty, we are not inclined to rule out the possibility of a general economic downturn, perhaps even a fairly serious recession, in the relatively near future. As we have repeatedly pointed out, the consumer debt situation is unhealthy (see, most recently, "Consumer Debt and Income," April 1956). True, at least in theory, readjustments in this area could take place under cover of the investment boom without serious repercussions in the rest of the economy, but there is no assurance that this will happen. On the contrary, given the perverse nature of an unplanned economy, the very opposite is probably more likely to occur, that is to say, the investment boom is probably more apt to serve as a pretext and justification to sellers and buyers alike for building up a still more flimsy structure of consumer credit. If this should happen, any faltering of investment could set quite a few stones to rolling down hill.

But before we conclude that a depression is just around the corner, we have to take account of one more factor—government spending. As indicated above, it turned up during 1955 after several years of decline, and the prospect is for a continued rise into the indefinite future. This will be a sustaining force, of course, and it will be one which can be strengthened relatively quickly. As always, the military wants more money than it is being given. "Service chiefs," *Business Week* reports (July 7, p. 31), "have asked for a total of $48.6 billion in new money for the next fiscal year—almost $14 billion more than Eisenhower and Wilson requested for this year," and "the '58 request for new money will definitely be larger than the last one." As we have lately been reminded by the Symington Committee's investigation of the relative strengths of the American and Soviet air forces, the military have powerful and vocal allies in the Democratic Party, not to mention the right wing of the Republican Party. Eisenhower, Wilson, and Humphrey, representing the

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more cautious elements in the ruling class, have so far managed to contain the push for a greatly expanded military budget. But it is difficult to imagine that they could—or perhaps would want to—hold out in the same way if an economic downturn should develop into a real threat of depression.

If all this is inconclusive and leaves you wondering what to expect, please put the blame where it belongs, not on us but on an irrational and anarchic economic system. It is easy enough to see where capitalism is headed in the long run but absolutely impossible to forecast what will happen on a month-to-month or year-to-year basis. (August 10, 1956)

Planning Under Capitalism

Keeping-up-with-the Joneses rivalry will be exploited by home appliance makers in an upcoming campaign to convince Americans they should replace refrigerators, ranges and washing machines every year or so. With over 90% of homes already equipped with modern refrigerators and with other appliances fast approaching this figure, industry planners feel that future sales slumps are inevitable unless a replacement market can be created similar to that which auto-makers enjoy. Front-running Frigidaire has already kicked off its campaign with a slogan: Planned Product Obsolescence.

—*Forbes Magazine,* April 1, 1956

No financial subject has caused more regrettable misunderstanding than the capital gains tax. Investors who should know better will report with every show of sincerity that the tax "freezes" them into their holdings. . . .

This is probably a case in which propaganda has been believed by the wrong persons. Wall Street intended it for Congress, hoping to get rid of the tax or to have it reduced. Instead, it was believed by Wall Street's customers.

—*New York Times,* February 5, 1956

They don't know the rules of the game.

Under existing circumstances, wealth cannot be enjoyed without dishonor, or foregone without misery.

—Bernard Shaw

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POWER ELITE OR RULING CLASS?

BY PAUL M. SWEEZY

There is a sort of contrived bloodlessness about American academic social science today. Its practitioners are much better trained than they used to be, but the consequence is not only technical competence. No less striking is the way they all fit into a few neat molds, like the models of an automobile coming off the factory assembly lines. They talk alike, deal in the same brand of trivialities, and take each other enormously seriously. Above all, there is a kind of tacit conspiracy to banish all really interesting and important issues from the universe of "scientific" discourse.

Against this background, C. Wright Mills, Associate Professor of Sociology at Columbia University, stands out as a man of courage and imagination, an iconoclast who cares little for the sacred cows of university administrators and foundation trustees, an innovator who wants to get along with the important business of understanding the United States of America in the middle of the twentieth century. In *White Collar: The American Middle Classes,* he explored the emotional and cultural wastelands of American society. Now, in *The Power Elite* (Oxford University Press, $6.00), he goes a step farther and asks who really runs the show and what makes them tick. The result is an absorbing book that has the added fascination which always attaches to forbidden topics.

The plan of Mills' book is as follows: He opens with a chapter ("The Higher Circles") which gives a general sketch of the theme of the work as a whole. There then follow nine chapters devoted to analyzing the Higher Circles from various angles and by various breakdowns: Local Society, Metropolitan 400, The Celebrities, The Very Rich, The Chief Executives, The Corporate Rich, The Warlords, The Military Ascendancy, and The Political Directorate. Finally come five chapters of interpretation and argumentation: The Theory of Balance, The Power Elite, The Mass Society, The Conservative Mood, and The Higher Immorality. There is no compelling logic to the organization of the material, and rigor and elegance are not among Mills' outstanding virtues as a writer. The result is that the book contains not a few asides and excursions, much repetition, and considerable excess verbiage. The whole work would have benefited from a severe editing, and its impact on the reader would, I think, have been sharpened and intensified if it had been cut by, say, a quarter to a third.

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Perhaps the greatest merit of *The Power Elite* is that it boldly breaks the tabu which respectable intellectual society has imposed on any serious discussion of how and by whom America is ruled. Those of us who inhabit what may be called the radical underworld have, of course, never been constrained by this particular tabu, but it must be admitted that radicals have produced very little of scientific value in recent years, and even work that does meet minimum standards of competence has been pretty effectively smothered. In contrast, *The Power Elite,* written by a professor at a respectable university and brought out by a properly conservative publishing house, has already been widely reviewed in such media as *Time* and *The Saturday Review of Literature,* and seems certain to provoke controversy among Mills' professional colleagues. For the first time in a long while, the literate public has been exposed to a serious discussion of social power and stratification at the national—as distinct from the local—level, and currently fashionable theories of the dispersal of power among many groups and interests have been bluntly challenged as flimsy apologetics. This is all to the good, and we may hope that Mills' example will be not only heeded but also emulated by other academic authors and established publishers.*

The fact that it raises crucially important issues is by no means the only merit of *The Power Elite.* Indeed, a reviewer cannot pretend even to list all the book's many excellencies: to appreciate them, one must read and study it with the care it deserves. But I do want to call attention to certain features which struck at least one reader as particularly noteworthy:

(1) There are numerous flashes of insight and happy formulations which not only enliven the narrative but, more important, help us to understand difficult or obscure problems. It would be hard

* Let me take this occasion to express a subsidiary hope that writers like Mills will become even bolder in challenging the tabus of respectability. Ever since it was founded in 1949, *Monthly Review* has consistently sought to analyze and clarify the problems of *national* power in American society—not, I hope, without throwing out some useful and interesting suggestions. Mills makes generous reference in his notes to our analysis of "The Roots and Prospects of McCarthyism" (MR, January 1954) but otherwise fails to note, even in a bibliographical way, any of the numerous articles and editorials which have dealt with one or more aspects of his chosen subject. Of course, it is possible that Mills may not be familiar with this material or may consider it of no value. A more likely explanation of his ignoring it, I think, is a (perhaps unconscious) fear of what might be called "guilt by citation." At any rate this fear is certainly common enough in academic circles nowadays, whether or not it was operative in Mills' case. From the point of view of the "power elite," it serves the useful purpose of helping to isolate radicals and censor radical thought. From the point of view of scientific discussion and advance, needless to say, its effects are wholly negative.

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to find a juster or more damning description of our postwar intellectuals than "those who have abandoned criticism for the new American celebration." (P. 25.) It is more than merely salutary to be reminded that "class consciousness is not equally characteristic of all levels of American society: it is most apparent in the upper class." (P. 30.) Much of the restless movement of the United States today is illuminated by the statement: "To succeed is to leave local society behind—although certification by it may be needed in order to be selected for national cliques." (P. 39.) How vividly the connection between wealth and social standing comes out in this remark: "All families would seem to be rather 'old,' but not all of them have possessed wealth for at least two but preferably three or four generations." (P. 49.) And how very apt and accurate is the designation of our present-day corporate system as an "apparatus of appropriation" (p. 107) which showers on its beneficiaries all kinds of blessings in addition to their take-home pay. (Mills is right to emphasize this theme in several different contexts: my only criticism is that he doesn't emphasize it enough.) These are but a few random samples, taken from the first quarter of *The Power Elite,* of what I mean by "flashes of insight and happy formulations." They are among the real pleasures and rewards of the book.

(2) Equally impressive is the factual material which Mills has assembled and analyzed in support or illustration of his arguments. He has made good use of the specialized work of social scientists—for example, H. B. Hollingshead's *Elmtown's Youth* and Dixon Wecter's *The Saga of American Society*—but for the most part he relies on original research in the current press and biographical sources. In this connection, he presents a number of statistical and semi-statistical studies which are important contributions in their own right and which should go far toward exploding some of the more popular and persistent myths about the rich and the powerful in America today. Chapter 5 on "The Very Rich" is essentially such a study, and there are others of a somewhat less ambitious nature in most of the chapters which undertake to categorize and describe "the power elite." Mills is well aware that an individual researcher, even with considerable help from friends, students, and assistants, can hardly hope to do more than scratch the surface of the vast amount of relevant material which exists in this country: he was, in fact, frequently obliged to put drastic limits on the scope of his efforts. Nevertheless, his factual statements are for the most part solidly, if not exhaustively, supported; and in a field which is not likely to benefit from the generosity (or curiosity) of the well-heeled foundations, we shall probably have to remain content with the contributions of individual researchers. One could only wish that they were all as careful, competent, and imaginative as Mills.

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(3) It seems to me that Mills speaks with the voice of an authentic American radicalism. He is highly critical of the American system and frequently lays about him with strong adjectives, heavy sarcasm, and biting invective. But he doesn't *hate* "the American way of life" and turn his back on it, as so many of our foreign critics do; and he isn't overawed by foreign authority, as so many of our native radicals have always been. One gets the impression that Mills not only understands but to a considerable extent even shares the predominant values of the American "mass society." He indulges in none of the currently fashionable deprecation of "materialism," and his attitude toward wealth is well indicated in a passage which is worth quoting at some length:

> The idea that the millionaire finds nothing but a sad, empty place at the top of society; the idea that the rich do not know what to do with their money; the idea that the successful become filled up with futility, and that those born successful are poor and little as well as rich—the idea, in short, of the disconsolateness of the rich—is, in the main, merely a way by which those who are not rich reconcile themselves to the fact. Wealth in America is directly gratifying and directly leads to many further gratifications.
>
> To be truly rich is to possess the means of realizing in big ways one's little whims and fantasies and sicknesses. "Wealth has great privileges," Balzac once remarked, "and the most enviable of them all is the power of carrying out thoughts and feelings to the uttermost; of quickening sensibility by fulfilling its myriad caprices." The rich, like other men, are perhaps more simply human than otherwise. But their toys are bigger; they have more of them; they have more of them all at once. (Pp. 163-164.)

The same idea is more simply summed up in a statement quoted from Sophie Tucker (without either approval or disapproval in the context): "I've been rich and I've been poor, and believe me, rich is best." (P. 346.) For a radical, the corollary of this attitude is that it is not wealth that is wrong with America but poverty, and that what is reprehensible about the rich is not that they enjoy the good things of life but that they use their power to maintain a system which needlessly denies the same advantages to others. Mills, to be sure, doesn't spell this out, but I think it is undeniably implicit in his whole position.

It is easy to criticize this point of view, and indeed much of what Mills himself says about the irresponsibility, mindlessness, and immorality of "the power elite" would furnish the basis of a damning indictment of wealth in a context of exploitation, an indictment which Mills conspicuously fails to elaborate in any thorough or sys-

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tematic way. But I think that Mills' weaknesses in this connection are characteristically American and that for this reason they have much to teach us about the possibility and requirements of an effective American radical propaganda. Denunciations of wealth as such, in the earlier tradition of radical thought, are likely to fall on deaf ears in this country today: rightly or wrongly, most Americans approve of it and want more for themselves. A successful radical movement must convince them that it really has more of it to offer the great majority of them than has the present system of waste and plunder.

(4) Mills performs a very valuable service in insisting, emphatically and at times even dogmatically, that what happens in the United States today depends crucially on the will and decision of a relatively very small group which is essentially self-perpetuating and responsible to no one but its own membership. And in upholding this position, he earns our gratitude by a forthright attack on the social harmonics of our latter-day Bastiats such as J. K. Galbraith and David Riesman. Galbraith and Riesman are able social scientists and keen observers of the American scene, but their overall "theories," for which they have received so much praise and fame, are childishly pretentious and superficial. It is high time that a reputable member of the academic community should say so. Some day American social scientists will acknowledge the debt they owe to Mills for having been the first among them to proclaim in no uncertain terms that the king is naked.

I do not mean to imply by this any blanket endorsement of Mills' theoretical contributions. As I hope to show immediately, Mills' theory is open to serious criticism. But he has the very great merit of bringing the real issues into the open and discussing them in a way that any one can understand; and he refuses to condone the kind of slick cover-up job that so many of his academic colleagues have been helping to put over on the American and foreign publics in the years of the "American celebration."

It is not easy to criticize *The Power Elite* from a theoretical standpoint for the simple reason that the author often states or implies more than one theory on a given topic or range of topics. Sometimes, I think, this arises from haste in composition and a certain intellectual sloppiness or impatience which seems to characterize much of Mills' work. Sometimes it seems to result from acceptance of the substance as well as the terminology of a kind of "elitist" doctrine which is basically antithetical to the general trend of his thought. And sometimes, no doubt, it arises from the fact that Mills, like most of the rest of us, has not made up his mind about all the problems of American social structure and finds himself with

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conflicting ideas rattling around in his head. In the brief space available here, I cannot attempt to untangle these confusions and contradictions, nor can I presume to say which of various possible interpretations most accurately reflects Mills' true meaning. Rather, I shall concentrate on trying to show what's wrong with certain ideas, adding in advance an invitation to Mills to correct me to the extent that I am wrong in attributing them to him or to make any other rejoinder he may think called for.

Mills starts off with a concept of the power elite which is disarmingly simple. Those who occupy the "command posts" of our major economic, military, and political institutions constitute the power elite—the big shareholders and executives of the corporate system, the generals and admirals of the Pentagon, and the elected and appointed officials who occupy political positions of national significance. But this of course tells us nothing about the men who stand at these posts—how they got there, their attitudes and values, their relations with each other and with the rest of society, and so on—nor does it provide any but an admittedly misleading clue to these questions: Mills himself repeatedly rejects the notion that the power elite in his sense constitutes some sort of natural aristocracy of ability and intelligence, in spite of the common connotation of the term "elite."

Having in effect defined the power elite as composed of the big shots of industry and government, Mills' next task is to devise a theoretical scheme within which to locate them and to guide his empirical investigations into their characteristics and habits. Two general approaches readily suggest themselves, and Mills follows them both without ever clearly distinguishing them, without asking how far and in what respects they may be in conflict, and without any systematic attempt to reconcile their divergent results. The first approach is via social class: the hypothesis can be put forward and tested that those who occupy the command posts do so as representatives or agents of a national ruling class which trains them, shapes their thought patterns, and selects them for their positions of high responsibility. The second approach is via what Mills variously calls the "major institutional orders" (e.g., on p. 269), the "major hierarchies" (p. 287), the "big three domains" (p. 288), and other more or less synonymous terms. This assumes that there are distinct spheres of social life—the economic, the military, and the political—each with its own institutional structure, that each of these spheres throws up its own leading cadres, and that the top men of all three come together to form the power elite.

Now there may be societies, past or present, in which this idea of more or less autonomous orders, hierarchies, or domains has enough

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relevance to make it a fruitful approach to problems of social structure and power. But it seems perfectly clear to me that the United States is not and never has been such a society. Moreover, the cumulative effect of the empirical data presented by Mills is decisively against any such interpretation of the American system. He adduces a wealth of material on our class system, showing how the local units of the upper class are made up of propertied families and how these local units are welded together into a wholly self-conscious national class. He shows how the "power elite" is overwhelmingly (and increasingly) recruited from the upper levels of the class system, how the same families contribute indifferently to the economic, military, and political "elites," and how the same individuals move easily and almost imperceptibly back and forth from one to another of these "elites." When it comes to "The Political Directorate" (Chapter 10), he demonstrates that the notion of a specifically political elite is in reality a myth, that the crucial positions in government and politics are increasingly held by what he calls "political outsiders," and that these outsiders are in fact members or errand boys of the corporate rich.

This demonstration in effect reduces "the big three" to "the big two"—the corporate and the military domains. There is no doubt at all about the decisive importance of the former, and Mills makes some of his most useful and interesting contributions in discussing the wealth, power, and other characteristics of the corporate rich.* But the evidence for an autonomous, or even semi-autonomous, military domain of comparable importance is so weak that it can be said to be almost nonexistent. Historically, to be sure, the military has normally been somewhat separated from the main stream of American life, and in this sense one could perhaps speak of a military domain. But it has been small and completely subject to civilian control, quite impotent in terms of the national decision-making which is the special function of Mills' power elite. In wartime, of course, the military has swelled enormously in size and power, but it is precisely then that it has ceased to be a separate domain. The civilian higher circles have moved into commanding military positions, and the top brass has been accepted into the higher circles. What happens in such times is that the "power elite" becomes militarized in the sense that it has to concern itself with military problems, it requires military skills, and it must inculcate in the underlying population greater respect for military virtues and personnel.

* The three chapters entitled "The Very Rich," "The Chief Executives," and "The Corporate Rich" are not really about different groups. They are simply about differently constructed but widely overlapping samplings of what is essentially a homogeneous social stratum which can be aptly designated as "the corporate rich."

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All this has nothing in common with the rise to power of a military order headed by an elite of "warlords," though it is in these terms that Mills describes what has been happening in the United States since the beginning of World War II, and indeed *must* describe it or else abandon the whole theory of a composite power elite made up of separate "domainal" elites; for on his own showing the "political directorate" is merely an emanation of the corporate rich. To support the theory of "The Warlords" (Chapter 8) and "The Military Ascendancy" (Chapter 9), Mills brings forth little evidence beyond the well-known facts that the military trade has traditionally required a specialized training and code of conduct, and that the Pentagon is an important center of power in American life. But these facts require no such fancy interpretation and are perfectly compatible with a more prosaic theory of the locus of power in mid-twentieth-century United States.

But Mills really relies much less on facts than on a sort of unstated syllogism to back up his warlord-military ascendancy theory. The syllogism might be formulated as follows: the major outlines of American policy, both foreign and domestic, are drawn in terms of a "military definition of world reality" which has been accepted by the power elite as a whole; this military definition of reality (also referred to as "military metaphysics") must be the product of the professional military mind ("the warlords"); *ergo* the warlords now occupy a decisive position within the power elite ("the military ascendancy"). This may look impressive and convincing at a first glance, but a moment's reflection will show that it explains nothing and constitutes no support whatever for Mills' theory. Professional military people naturally think in military terms and have doubtless always tried to persuade others to see things their way. Throughout most of United States history, they have succeeded, if at all, only in wartime. The real problem is to understand why it is that since World War II the whole "power elite" has come to think increasingly in military terms and hence to accord a place of greater honor and power to the military. Without an answer to this, all the facts that seem to Mills to add up to the "military ascendancy" of the "warlords" remain quite unexplained.

Now Mills himself never faces up to this question, and the only relevant answer I can find is that the United States now, unlike in the past, lives in a "military neighborhood" (the phrase is used on a number of occasions), which presumably means that the country is under constant threat (or potential threat) of attack and military defeat. This is more sophisticated than saying that we live in mortal danger of red aggression, but its explanatory value is exactly the same: in either case the increasing militarization of American life

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is the result of external forces. The rise of the warlords, then, is seen as the outcome of a world historical process for which the United States has no responsibility and over which it has no control, and not, as Mills clearly wants to prove, as the outcome of *internal* forces operating in the military domain.

Thus, while Mills appears to have little in common with the cold-war liberals, and in fact rather generally holds them in contempt, his theory of the role of the military leads to very much the same conclusions. I believe that this is no accident. "Elitist" thinking *inevitably* diverts attention from problems of social structure and process and leads to a search for external causes of social phenomena. Simon-pure elitists like Pareto and his followers frankly adopt this method and find what they are looking for in the alleged natural qualities of their elites. Semi-elitists like Mills—people who think they can adopt the terminology without any of the basic ideas of elitist theory—tend to get bogged down in confusion from which the only escape is to borrow the most banal ideas of their opponents.

It is too bad that Mills gets into this kind of a mess, because, as I indicated above, his work is strongly influenced by a straightforward class theory which, if he had stuck to it and consistently explored its implications, would have enabled him to avoid completely the superficialities and pitfalls of elitist thinking. The uppermost class in the United States is, and long has been, made up of the corporate rich who directly pull the economic levers. Prior to the Great Depression and World War II, the corporate rich left political and military matters largely (though by no means exclusively) in the control of hired hands and trusted agents; but since the highly dangerous economic breakdown of the 30s, the Big Boys have increasingly taken over the key positions themselves. Their unwillingness to solve the economic problems of capitalism through a really massive welfare state program meant that they welcomed the war as the salvation of their system. Since the end of World War II, they have accepted, nay created and sold through all the media of mass communications, a "military definition of reality" as the ideological-political underpinning of the war-preparations economy, which remains crucial to the whole profit-making mechanism on which their wealth and power rests. For this purpose, they have lavishly subsidized and encouraged the military, which in turn has not only grown vastly in size but also has been enormously flattered and has become the most loyal defender and promoter of the "free enterprise" system. The picture of "warlords" exercising a "military ascendancy" is fanciful: *our* warlords have no fundamental values or purposes different from those of their corporate colleagues; many of them perform virtually indistinguishable jobs; and the crowning

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achievement of a military career today is the board chairmanship of a billion-dollar corporation.* At the same time, we have nothing even approaching a unified military order or caste seeking to impose its "military metaphysics" on the nation. The most famous of our "warlords," President Eisenhower, is now the most peaceful of our influential politicians; while our most strident "militarists" are civilian Senators Symington and Jackson whose closest affiliations would seem to be with the multi-billion-dollar aircraft industry.

No, the facts simply won't fit Mills' theory of three (or two) sectional elites coming together to form an overall power elite. What we have in the United States is a *ruling class* with its roots deeply sunk in the "apparatus of appropriation" which is the corporate system. To understand this ruling class—its metaphysics, its purposes, and its morals—we need to study, not certain "domains" of American life, however defined, but the whole system of monopoly capitalism.

A large part of Mills' theory and most of his facts support this view. This, indeed, is why his book, for all its weaknesses, is such a vital and powerful document. Let us hope that in the future he will drop *all* the elitist nonsense and make the contribution he is capable of making to deepening our theory and understanding of the American class system.**

In conclusion, I should like to comment very briefly on four of the many issues which would merit detailed discussion in a full-dress review of *The Power Elite*.

(1) Because he blurs the whole problem of class and class relations, Mills fails to throw any but incidental light on the dynamics

* On this whole range of topics, see the fascinating article entitled "They're Masters of Buying By the Billion" in *Business Week* for June 23, 1956. "They" are Generals C. S. Irvine and E. W. Rawlings, in charge of procurement and supply for the Air Force. Mr. Dudley C. Sharp, civilian Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, is quoted as saying: "These two could run any business in the world. They're absolutely the finest executives I've ever met." Chances are, too, that they will end up running one or more of the world's biggest businesses!

** Mills' reasons for rejecting the ruling class concept are stated in a footnote (p. 277) which deserves no more than a footnote in reply. "Ruling class," he says, is a "badly loaded" phrase in the sense that it contains the theory that "an economic class rules politically." What of it? The question is whether the theory is applicable to the United States today, and if investigation shows that it is, then the only "loading" is on the side of truth. As I have argued above, most of Mills' factual material supports the ruling class theory to the hilt—provided only that one doesn't insist on interpreting the words "economic" and "class" in an impossibly narrow and tortured way. For the rest, I have already said enough about Mills' alternative theory, repeated in the footnote in question, that a "coalition" of the "higher agents" of the "three domains" constitutes a power elite. (There is, of course, no loading at all in the phrase "power elite"!)

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of the class system—how people lose high-class status, how new members of the ruling class are co-opted, and so on. In this connection, he completely fails to understand the role of the preparatory schools and colleges as recruiters for the ruling class, sucking upwards the ablest elements of the lower classes and thus performing the double function of infusing new brains into the ruling class and weakening the potential leadership of the working class. It is this aspect of the American educational system, involving as it does fairly generous scholarships and other forms of assistance for the bright poor, which is most often and least deservedly praised as democratic.

(2) While Mills' chapter on "The Celebrities" is informative and amusing, it is a hopeless muddle from the theoretical point of view. The celebrities—of screen, TV, radio, stage, sport—are not an integral part of the ruling class or the power elite, and in general they do not compete in prestige with the rich and the powerful. On the contrary, the rich and the powerful have every interest in building up the celebrities, partly because it is good business and partly to divert the attention of the underlying population from more serious matters. This is all part of what Mills elsewhere calls, in a memorable phrase, "the grim trivialization of American life." Mills' confusion on these questions—which of course does not prevent him from saying many true and penetrating things about them—stems in large part from the lack of any clear or usable theory of prestige. He treats prestige as a pure magnitude and quite misses the point that there are different kinds as well as quantities of prestige and that they have different bases and perform different functions in the social structure.

(3) I pointed out above (p. 141) that Mills strongly insists, quite rightly in my view, that major national decisions in this country are made by a relatively small group of people at the top of the social pyramid. But in his concern to drive this point home, it seems to me that he goes much too far in the direction of what I may call "historical voluntarism." On page 24 of *The Power Elite,* Mills makes the following statement:

> It is . . . true that if most men and women take whatever roles are permitted to them and enact them as they are expected to by virtue of their position, this is precisely what the elite need *not* do, and often do not do. They may call into question the structure, their position within it, or the way they are to enact that position.

If this were *really* true, our only hope of understanding the behavior of the top group would be through psychoanalysis: the objectively discoverable pressures and compulsions of the social order

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which operate on the rest of us would be irrelevant to these august Olympians. But of course it is not true, and I make so bold as to say that most of the time Mills himself knows it perfectly well. What corporation executive can afford to order his behavior without regard to his company's profit-and-loss statement? What American politician today can flout the interests of the corporate rich who put him in office? What military man can say that the Soviet Union is no menace and the United States should set the world an example of unilateral disarmament? To be sure, each one of these gentlemen can behave in the indicated fashion, provided he is prepared to lose his job and with it his power. But this is precisely the point: like everyone else, the "elite" have roles to perform, and for the most part they are exacting ones: failure means loss of position and power.

What Mills could and should have argued in this connection is that the roles are *not* like those of a theatrical performance, completely mapped out and rigidly determined in advance. The actors have a *range of choice* which is set by the nature and laws of the social structure under which they live, and this range may even include such fateful alternatives as that which faced Harry Truman in August of 1945, whether or not to drop a bomb that would in a single flash snuff out the lives of a quarter of a million human beings. "Men make their own history," Marx wrote in the *Eighteenth Brumaire,* "but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past." That is the simple truth, confirmed by mountains of historical and personal experience alike. Why can't social scientists as reasonable and sensible as C. Wright Mills take it in *and hold onto it*?

(4) Finally, a word about a matter which has undoubtedly disturbed some left-wing readers of *The Power Elite*. Mills, they say, explodes many myths about the United States today. He shows that the country is run by a tiny irresponsible minority, and that in crucial respects the consequence is a drift from bad to worse. But he says nothing at all about what can or should be done about it.

For my part, I see no valid ground for criticism here. We should be grateful for such a good book, and we can draw our own conclusions about what to do about the situation it reveals. We can even go farther and commend Mills for his restraint: we know from his association with the magazine *Dissent* that Mills considers himself a socialist, and we can be pretty sure that under present circumstances *The Power Elite* with explicitly stated socialist conclusions would never have been published, reviewed, and read as it has been without the conclusions.

For the rest, it is no violation of principle not to set down

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everything in your mind every time you put pen to paper. What *is* a violation of principle is to set down a lot of things that aren't true or you don't believe, and on this score, so far as I am able to judge, Mills deserves a clean bill of health.

A REVOLUTIONARY FORMULA

BY ALEXANDER L. CROSBY

One of the gifts conferred by the Republican administration upon the citizens of New York is a talking mailbox in front of the General Post Office. You ask a question, there's a moment of silence while the box thinks up the answer, and then the box speaks (or maybe it's a public servant at the other end of the wire that leads into the building).

"Can you tell me," I asked on a bright afternoon in May, "what the letters RF stand for, on the ceiling of the main lobby?"

"Good afternoon," the box replied through its perforated front. "When this building was put in place—that is, when it was—well, they mean Republic of France."

The tone and words were evasive. Was the voice of the box a Truman holdover, refusing to concede that the real meaning was Republicans Forever? Or was it hiding a secret qualification of the slogan engraved outside: "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds"? It could be Reluctant Feet.

More likely, the architect knew enough political science to label the post office for what it actually is: a Revolutionary Formula. There is no more sinister example of socialistic activity to be found in the nation. Every day hundreds of thousands of letter carriers traverse city streets and country roads, reminding every boxholder that socialism works.

The post office should be desocialized before its poison contaminates healthy American institutions such as General Motors and

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American Tel & Tel. All we need is a simple act of Congress saying that after a certain date the government won't carry the mail. Congress could vote this law as easily as it voted to end price controls.

Private enterprise would respond with the zest shown by landlords when their buildings were decontrolled. Half a dozen postal syndicates would be formed: Whirlwind Delivery, Jet Postal Service, Electronic Express, Rocket Post, Supersonic Mail, Atomic Communications.

The launching of these enterprises would be the most powerful pump-priming since the first WPA man put rake to leaf. Branch post offices and main offices would be built all over, employing countless construction workers. Drab city streets would blossom with clusters of gaily painted mailboxes at every corner. Trucks would be ordered by the hundreds of thousands and drivers would be hired in similar quantities. Since four or five times as many letter carriers and two or three times as many clerks would be needed, millions of jobs would be created for white collar workers and walkers. The printing and paper industries would prosper even more than they do now. Unemployment would virtually disappear.

Driven by competition and anxious stockholders, the private postal systems would offer many inducements to bring patrons to their stamp windows and parcel post counters. Lobbies would be furnished with easy chairs, potted plants and potted patrons who had ordered drinks from circulating hostesses while standing in line. It is probable that the old steel pens would be replaced with well chained fountain pens, thus ending a pointless phase of civilization.

Our socialized postal system has made only the feeblest efforts to drum up trade. The dynamic campaigns of private enterprise would be a heartening contrast to more than a century of inertia. *Life* would become more corpulent with a new source of four-color advertisements at $32,740 a page. Other magazines and thousands of newspapers would share in the bonanza. Radio and television would harvest tens of millions. Picture a lusty blonde quartet, demurely costumed in three postage stamps each, singing these lines to the tune of our national anthem:

Oh, say can you write
  To your mother tonight?
Get the hell from TV
  And address the old lady.
You can trust Rocket Post—
  We are faster than most.
Dispel her despair
  With a message by air.

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Fortunes would be spent and morals dissipated in seeking the custom of such heavy mailers as Sears Roebuck and Book-of-the-Month. Christmas liquor would flow by the carload, not the case. Even *Monthly Review* would rate a bottle or two.

Individuals would be wooed with special stunts: "For only 5¢ extra your love letter will be enclosed in a scented cellophane wrapper. You can choose from six intoxicating fragrances!" "Just send us 25 envelopes with the Supersonic Mail postmark and only $1 in cash. You will receive a beautiful plastic letter opener with your name in gold letters."

Of course it would no longer be possible to deliver a letter for 3¢. What with the trebling of manpower and the sextupling of rents and overhead, the cost would be about 10¢ a letter. Allowing 2¢ for profit, the first-class rate would be 12¢. This would be a painful tariff for habitual correspondents of modest means. But as Howard Pyle, the deputy assistant to President Eisenhower, so trenchantly commented on unemployment in Detroit, the "right to suffer is one of the joys of a free economy." Any ambitious bird dog would always be able to retrieve a stamp, if necessary by licking away the postmark.

Balm for the grief of a 12¢ rate would be found by patriotic minds in the knowledge that by wiping out the deficit of a socialized postal system we can better protect ourselves against socialist ruffians abroad. Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield estimated in March that the $4,600,000,000 postal deficit of the past ten years could have paid for 125 destroyers or 1,000 bombers. (It could also have raised the standard of living in India, Costa Rica, and Mississippi, but let's not get sentimental about people.) In short, the United States may soon be down to its last hydrogen bomb because the selfish citizens cling to the 3¢ letter rate.

Superficially, it might seem illogical to have six duplicating postal systems, even though we are accustomed to greater duplication in the sale of gasoline, cigarettes, soap, shoes, and frozen peas. A multiple private operation would, however, follow the example of one of the most logical and conservative businesses of our economy: life insurance. There are 1,060 life insurance companies in the United States, each with a complete staff of directors, officers, supervisors, doctors, lawyers, actuaries, cashiers, public relations men, advertising men, promotion men, clerks, secretaries, stenographers, and janitors. Plus thousands and thousands of agents. Altogether, more than 370,000 people are falling over each other in an effort to convince you and your neighbor that Old Reliable is more reliable than Old Faithful, and vice versa. This is the freest kind of enterprise, which we are all happy to pay for through our noses. Anyone who proposed to socialize the insurance busines would be stripped of his

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policies and starved to death.

How the Post Office Department has managed to stave off de-socialization is hard to explain. Why haven't congressional committees exposed this scarlet letter in our political alphabet? Why haven't the newspapers and magazines denounced it? Why haven't thousands of Khrushchev-fearing Americans spoken out from pulpit, platform, cracker barrel, and breakfast table?

There is strong evidence that the Post Office Department, betraying its socialist heritage and resorting to capitalist shenanigans, has bought off the guardians of our liberties. It has given to every congressman his most treasured perquisite: the franking privilege. It has silenced the newspapers and magazines with such absurdly low rates for second-class mail that the publishers can roll in clover and caviar. Other sources of possible resistance have been neutralized by the Department's cunning selection of subjects for its commemorative stamps. Within the past few years, honors have been meted out to bankers, lawyers, chicken raisers, chemists, engineers, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, volunteer firemen, truckers, railroaders, Rotarians, mothers, newsboys, merchant seamen, wild turkeys, and a long list of dead Americans who probably left thousands of relatives and admirers.

There have been no stamps in honor of Albert Einstein, Eugene Debs, Thorstein Veblen, or Henry Demarest Lloyd, whose philosophies have won greater acceptance by the Post Office than that of a recently commemorated decedent, Andrew W. Mellon. Those socialists in Washington aren't dumb. Put a socialist on a stamp and even the wild turkeys would start yammering.

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JUVENILE DELINQUENCY UNDER CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM

BY ARTHUR K. DAVIS

Juvenile delinquency is a vague term covering almost any sort of youthful "anti-social" behavior from mere disobedience to serious crime. Newspapers today are filled with accounts of vandalism, thefts, and acts of violence committed by teen-agers, often with no apparent reason. A massive literature on causes and cures has piled up. Yet delinquency continues to increase, regardless of reform measures, exhortations, research reports, or "treat 'em rougher" tactics.

The basic facts concerning juvenile delinquency are clear, despite the incompleteness and other uncertainties of our statistics. First, there are more and tougher cases—delinquency is spreading and intensifying, mainly in the cities but lately in the rural areas, too. Second, there is a sex difference: boy offenders outnumber girls 4 or 5 to 1. Boys' offenses are usually directed against property and public order, girls' offenses are usually sexual. (Boys figure in these sexual affairs, of course; they just aren't apprehended on such grounds.) Third, there is a class angle: delinquents mostly come from the working class.

Capitalism, Social Class, And Delinquency

What most of our scholarly studies either gloss over or entirely ignore is the key role of capitalism and its class system in generating crime and delinquency. Occasionally a notable exception appears, such as the late Edwin Sutherland's *White Collar Crime* (New York, 1948). This classic analysis showed how the crimes of upper-class businessmen far surpass in importance the relatively petty offenses of the working-class individuals who constitute most of our prison population. True, the book did not point out all its own implications—that was done later by Leo Huberman ("Capitalism and Crime," MR, October and November, 1952). But it honestly gave us the basic facts, and these have never been challenged.

Equally revealing analyses of juvenile delinquency are now available, though they, too, stop short of spelling out the obviously devastating implications for the moral worth of capitalism.

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That delinquency is one price of our business civilization is hardly a new idea. Before World War II, many case histories and spot-maps showed that the great bulk of youthful offenders came from urban slums. Typical of this vaguely class-oriented approach are the studies of Clifford Shaw, especially his *Juvenile Delinquency in Urban Areas* (Chicago, 1942), a standard work. Since then, however, there has been a tendency for scholars to focus upon psychological and biological theories of delinquency. A prominent example is W. Sheldon's *Varieties of Delinquent Behavior* (New York, 1949). Even such renowned authorities as the Gluecks have flirted with (and been seduced by) the effort to link criminal tendencies to a physical body-type allegedly possessing certain psychological traits, such as extroversion and hostility (*Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency,* New York, 1950). Actually, this regression to biological interpretations of social life, though it has never become a dominant view, seems to be essentially the academic counterpart of reactionary trends prevalent in capitalist societies since their war-engendered recovery from the Great Depression.

Lately, however, the social sources of delinquency have been re-emphasized by such books as M. L. Barron's *The Juvenile in Delinquent Society* (New York, 1954) and most recently A. K. Cohen's *Delinquent Boys* (Glencoe, 1955). Professor Cohen points out that the hard core of delinquency is gang behavior which is intentionally malicious. It directly flouts respectable upper-class standards—respect for property and authority, thrift, ambition, courtesy and self-restraint, industriousness in school—precisely *because* they are respectable and upper-class. Some juveniles, of course, like adult criminals, steal to get things not otherwise obtainable. Such behavior is understandable —the youngster pursues a legitimate goal (the acquisition of property) by illegitimate (though not unusual) methods. But much juvenile crime consists of seemingly irrational destruction, not acquisition, of property. Take the bunch of kids that swipes a cap from under a storekeeper's nose and then chucks it away ten minutes later. Such a gang steals for a sporting thrill, for the prestige of pulling off a tough stunt, for the plain hell of it. This cussedness is the core of delinquency. It is essentially a lower-class response to the frustrations and inequities inherent in our class system.

Our Delinquent Society

Children from the more privileged social levels can be taught the respectable virtues fairly effectively, for the simple reason that their conformity can be appropriately rewarded. From their parents and neighbors, pre-school children acquire the essentials of their class culture—their basic attitudes toward property, clothes, manners, sex, recreation, other groups. Later, the schools, governed by upper-

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class standards and people, reinforce this class system. Hollingshead's revealing study of a small Illinois town shows that the decisive factor in getting good marks, winning prizes, and participating in extra-curricular activities in Elmtown High School is the class status of the student's family. The higher his class status, the better his chances for high scholastic and social rating (*Elmtown's Youth,* New York, 1949).

But for less privileged children the respectable virtues signify fewer rewards and more frustration. The working-class youngster soon learns that his overcrowded home, his run-down neighborhood, his parents' jobs, his clothes, and his speech stigmatize him in the larger community. He comes to resent his family. To become independent of it, and to get the money he needs for recreational pleasures, he is prone at the earliest possible moment to leave school for a job, necessarily a low-skilled job that confirms his working-class status. "He is made to feel unwanted in the classroom, on the playground, or in the clubs and extra-curricular activities that are an integral part of the school situation. The same isolating process operates in the churches and youth groups. . . . The [working-class] youngster is 'wrong' socially . . . he is never allowed to forget that he is 'wrong.'" (*Ibid.,* pp. 358, 443.)

In hard-core delinquency, according to Cohen, some working-class youths find the chance for prestige and self-expression denied to them through bourgeois channels. By means of vandalism and violence, they vent their aggression on the bourgeois codes causing their humiliation. Many working-class children play hookey from school to escape a painful situation; the hard-core offender does so for the additional reason that good boys don't.

Here we must qualify Cohen's statement. Hard-core delinquency isn't *merely* the negation of bourgeois values—it directly *imitates* some of them. Where else but in our war-oriented, race-conscious business culture have graft, fraud, flashy spending, coercion, and getting ahead at any cost become standard operating procedure? Nonetheless, compared to the usual academic treatise, Professor Cohen's book is a rare achievement. *It clearly shows that hard-core delinquency is an organic part of our social structure, that it is generated mainly by our economic and class order.*

But we must not overstate the case. Not *all* delinquency is of the hard-core variety. There is a wide shadow zone of occasional "growing-pains" delinquency into which children of all classes may temporarily wander. We do not know the extent of upper-class juvenile offenses. Nor should we conclude that working-class youngsters automatically become dead-end kids. Most of them don't. Some become Horatio Algers and struggle upward into the bourgeoisie. Others ad-

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just themselves, often without excessive friction, to the realities of their working-class situation, perhaps hoping that their children may win a place on the social escalator. Still others, in growing numbers, slowly unite their energies in the labor movement. On their shoulders rides our hope of a better world.

Social Problems Under Capitalism: A Dynamic View

The implications of the foregoing analysis are obvious, although American scholars are understandably gun-shy about exploring them. If the cause of juvenile delinquency is the class system of capitalist society, the cure must lie in the removal of the cause. This would ultimately require drastic changes in the distribution of wealth and power, the conquest of scarcity, the elimination of private ownership of producer goods—in a nutshell, the end of capitalism. Under capitalism, therefore, the remedy for juvenile delinquency is decisively blocked by those very class realities in which delinquency originates. The only policies toward delinquency that are possible in our present situation are suppression and fringe reforms. Either we rough 'em up, or we preoccupy ourselves with small-scale individual prevention and rehabilitation. Usually we work both methods at once. Neither gets at the underlying causes.

Meanwhile, what are the implications of the rising rate of juvenile delinquency? It is estimated that in 1952, two percent of our children 10 to 17 years old were apprehended by the police. Not very alarming, you may say. But this is a conservative estimate, making no allowance for the much larger number of unapprehended offenses. Moreover, it is double the pre-War II rate, and it is still rising steadily (Bloch and Flynn, *Juvenile Delinquency,* New York, 1956, p. 32). Observe that the rate has risen along with our expanding economic prosperity. I infer that more successful social climbing and money-making by some families entail (among other things) more frustration for less fortunate families, and hence greater pressures toward crime and delinquency. Failure is relative. That the real income of many, though by no means all, Americans is higher than ever is irrelevant in this context. Failure is not measured by absolute impoverishment but by the relative gap between a person's aspirations and his actual situation, as Thorstein Veblen perceived two generations ago. And that gap today is wider for comparatively more people than it was during the depression 30s.

The reason seems to lie in the greater scope that prosperity provides for capitalism's intrinsically exploitative dynamics, whereby the owners and managers of the productive apparatus increase their rate of profit-making during inflation. Gunther Stein reports that annual corporation profits per American household rose steadily from

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an average of $183 a year for the 1936-40 period to $771 a year for 1946-50 (*The World the Dollar Built,* MR Press, 1953, p. 224). For 1951-55 the corresponding yearly figure is about $840 per household. (Data on profits are derived from the *Economic Report of the President,* January, 1956, p. 223, and do not include the profits of unincorporated businesses.)

It appears that the rates of corporate profits and of delinquency —and doubtless other indices of capitalist success and failure—tend to rise and fall together. Inflation has not only increased business profits and facilitated other achievements legitimate by capitalism's own standards; it has also intensified the illegitimate aspects of capitalist activities—high-pressure huckstering, influence-peddling, windfall profiteering, fee-splitting, shady government giveaways, defense boondoggling, undercover deals. People imbued with capitalist acquisitiveness are like pigs with insatiable appetites: the more boodle in the feed-trough, the harder they try to get all four feet into it. Prosperity increases the powers of capitalism both to reward and to punish.

That a capitalist economy tends to breed its own inner economic tensions and ultimate breakdown Marx showed long ago. But capitalism also generates conflicting social pressures likewise making for deterioration. The line between economic and social contradictions is of course arbitrary—the same productive and class system underlies both. It is mainly the mechanisms and manifestations that differ. A whole series of "social problems," not usually viewed or viewable in strictly economic terms, can be analyzed in this broader but still essentially Marxian frame of reference. This approach is generally superior to orthodox academic methods, which habitually obscure the underlying essentials with statistical correlations of surface phenomena and over-elaborate multiple-factor theories.

In this light, let us re-state our present thesis. Juvenile delinquency is an inherent product of capitalist society; it is getting worse as capitalism advances; and there is no basic cure for it under capitalism, because the very conditions causing delinquency also block its removal. These conditions include private ownership of producer goods, great inequality of social classes combined with an equalitarian philosophy, and an economy based on relative and artificial scarcity. Together, these are the *sine qua non* of capitalism. Whether there are additional factors in delinquency that are not uniquely capitalistic will be considered in the next section.

What other major social problems does this key unlock? Mental disease, for one: the available evidence indicates that class tensions, especially acute in the working class, underlie much of our increasing burden of mental patients. Other major problems—municipal financ-

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ing, housing and urban blight, governmental administration, school and college financing—fall partly or wholly into the same general pattern. They hinge significantly on social class or on the distribution of wealth controlled by the class system; they are basically insoluble (except for fringe makeshifts) in that class setting; they are getting worse right along. But I cannot elaborate here.

Inequality Under Capitalism and Socialism

An organic relation between juvenile delinquency and certain aspects of capitalist society has been demonstrated. But it does not follow that the end of capitalism means the end of delinquency.

The cause of delinquency seems to lie in the contradictory combination of equalitarian and hierarchical elements in the basic social structure. Together, they generate the popular resentment that manifests itself partly in delinquency. This contradiction appears to be inherent, but not equally so, in all industrial societies, whether capitalist or socialist.

An industrial society consists of a multitude of specialized, hence (in certain respects) unequal, roles. Its dynamic character requires great mobility on the part of its members from job to job, place to place. It demands learned rather than inherited aptitudes. It makes for individualism. But to unify this mass of immensely specialized roles, democracy based on a certain minimum of equal legal, political, economic, and social rights is indispensable. Among those rights is equality of opportunity for self-development and for attaining the more desirable jobs. Socialism is the extension and substantial raising of the minimum already achieved by capitalism. In brief, socialism will tend to equalize opportunity leading to, and the level of living derived from, various occupational roles, but it will not equalize the jobs themselves.

Social inequality may arbitrarily be broken down into (1) the unequal desirability, power, and prestige of the jobs people hold; (2) unequal distribution of wealth. Capitalist society greatly plays up the latter aspect of inequality by its economy of relative scarcity and by its unique class system, the core of which is private ownership, exploitation, and inheritance of the means of production by a few families. Socialism will largely eliminate scarcity, inheritance, and private ownership of producer goods, and thus markedly reduce the unequal distribution of consumer goods and services.

But the former aspect of inequality will persist under socialism as under capitalism. Some jobs are cleaner than others, have pleasanter working conditions or more perquisites, permit more initiative, carry more power or public recognition, and so on. A scientist usually has more prestige than an accountant; executives in heavy industry com-

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monly rate over those in retailing; engineers on express trains outrank those on yard switchers; doctors are generally held in greater esteem than undertakers. No doubt socialism will change many specific applications of this principle, but without relaxing the principle itself.

The contrast between top executives and rank-and-file workers with respect to power and prestige seems to be inherent in any industrial economy. The managers and technical experts of an industrial organization, like the officers of an army, can comprise but a minority of the total personnel. Indeed, the great technical advances of industrialism under a socialist regime seem certain to require *more* specialization, hence *more* hierarchy, not less. True, there will also be stronger trade unions, consumers' organizations, and policy-making political movements far more reflective of, and responsive to, the common people's interests than is now the case. Yet these are hierarchies, too. They may check and balance, but can hardly negate, other bureaucracies.

Though this is in no sense a complete analysis of social inequality under capitalism and socialism, it is enough for present purposes to show that a socialist society will retain a good part of capitalist inequality. With this in mind, let us take up the problem of juvenile delinquency under socialism.

Delinquency in the USSR

Soviet newspapers reveal that there is considerable hooliganism and drunkenness among Soviet youth. How extensive this delinquency is we do not know, but it is serious enough to draw the periodic attention of top-level officials. A survey of Soviet publications made by Harvard's Russian Research Center for the United States Information Agency's cold-war propaganda found that drunkenness and delinquency are "widespread" among bored Soviet workers, "prevalent" among collective farmers during rural festivals, and common among the "gilded youth" of privileged families (M. Field in *Social Problems,* October, 1955, pp. 100-109). If this scholarly axe-grinding leaves us wondering how a wheel ever turns in the USSR, it also reminds us that socialism is no panacea.

Let us distinguish between the transition and the mature phases of a socialist regime. The Soviet Union still belongs in the former stage. What part of Soviet juvenile delinquency is due to the temporary conditions of the changeover, and what part to socialism? We cannot say.

Acute tension characterizes every revolutionary transition in rough proportion to (a) its speed, (b) the amount of internal resistance to it, and (c) external interference with it. The difficulties

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of the Soviet case have been harshly accentuated by that country's initial social backwardness, its encirclement by hostile capitalist powers, and—as Veblen would have put it—by the "penalties of being first." Boredom, delinquency, parvenu vulgarity—like dictatorial oppression and injustice—are symptoms of Russia's transition ordeal. But are they also necessary features of mature socialism? In a discussion of "Freedom under Socialism" (MR, May, 1951), I expressed the view that freedom should decrease during the transition and increase with the maturity of socialism. Other writers, both before and since, have advanced the same idea. The thaw in Russia following the Chinese Revolution, the failure of Western encirclement, and the death of Stalin, tends to confirm this reasoning, and to suggest that the severity of other indices of tension in Soviet society may logically be expected to decline in the future.

Delinquency Under Mature Socialism

A socialist society may be considered mature to the degree that its economy is nationalized, democratically managed by central planning for use rather than for profit, and sufficiently productive to overcome the main problems of scarcity—at least with respect to housing, well paid jobs, nutrition, health and medical care, social security, time and facilities for leisure, and improvement of the apparatus of civilization. This means a friendly international environment and a standard of living comparable, say, to that now enjoyed by the privileged minorities of advanced capitalist nations. It need not involve universal equality of income.

Once socialism is thus established, the tension between equality and hierarchy should decrease. I think the delinquency rate will also decline. But I do not believe that it will disappear.

The screening of individuals for job aptitudes and achievements will continue under socialism as under capitalism, though with greater fairness and less extreme rewards and penalties. Managers and scientists must be selected and trained for responsible and exacting roles. Workers must be motivated to carry out their tasks with reasonable diligence and constructiveness. Whatever the yardstick and however evenly it is applied, some people will rate higher than others. Frustration and resentment seem inevitable among the also-rans, whether adults or school children. Not all of the latter will become delinquents —many responses to frustration are socially useful or neutral. But *some* attitudes and activities damaging to socialism appear certain to emerge among *some* of the rejects. There is no basis for ruling out such undesirable phenomena as graft, alcoholism, neurosis, crime, or delinquency.

On the other hand, the invidious effects of differences in social

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status will assuredly, under mature socialism, be restricted by the decreased inequality of wealth, as we have seen, and by the substantial elimination of discrimination based on race, creed, nationality, and perhaps even sex. They should be further reduced by shorter work periods and by more emphasis on avocational pursuits as sources of competitive achievement. The Elmtown study shows that social status is a key factor in determining an individual's capacities. Not only do upper-class children benefit from the superior power of their families. From their earliest years, they also acquire greater social know-how in manipulating people and ideas, and they have more opportunity to develop the personality traits that count in modern society. When, under socialism, status inequality is lessened, differences in individual capacities should also be reduced. Hence it should be easier for socialism to harmonize two great social aims which, in capitalist society, tend sharply to conflict. These aims are on the one hand greater equality in the distribution of income, and on the other rewards to the individual according to effective capacity or performance. To expect that individual differences will disappear, however, is utopian.

Finally, it is important to recognize that the resources of a mature socialist order for rehabilitative measures for juvenile delinquents are much greater than those of a capitalist society. More and better trained people and larger budgets can be assigned to group and individual case work, neighborhood projects, special educational programs, and research. Such social services, however, are primarily curative, not preventive.

In the light of our present knowledge, we cannot affirm that, under socialism, the roots of juvenile delinquency, crime, and mental disease will be eradicated. But we can feel sure that they will be cut back. The socialist conquest of scarcity will lighten, even if it does not entirely remove, the burden of delinquency. Notwithstanding its own intrinsic tensions, socialism is the next great step forward for the human race.

A class which bears all the disadvantages of the social order without enjoying its advantages, one to which the social system appears in purely hostile aspects—who can demand that such a class respect this social order? . . . The contempt for the existing social order is most conspicuous in its extreme form—that of offenses against law. If the influences demoralizing to the workingman act more powerfully than usual, he becomes an offender.
—Friederich Engels, *Condition of the Working Class in England,* 1844

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BEHIND THE MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT

BY ALEINE AUSTIN

Ten months ago, the Negroes of Montgomery, Alabama, startled the rest of the nation and world by their unprecedented united protest action against segregation on the city's buses. On December 5, the day after Mrs. Rosa Parks was fined for refusing to give her seat to a white man, almost the entire Negro population defiantly stayed off the buses. Everywhere, people watched this dramatic development: Was it merely a gesture of protest? Would it subside in a few days' time? To the amazement of the onlookers, the boycott continued, grew stronger, more organized, and more determined. Car pools were organized and coordinated, mass meetings were held regularly, speeches calling for passive resistance to injustice were made by a hitherto unknown young Negro pastor, and support from the Negro community within and beyond Montgomery was of a new crusading nature.

Correspondents from all sections of the country and the globe began pouring into Montgomery. The situation was described in detail in thousands of newspapers and magazines; radio and TV programs covered the story. By and large, the events occurring in Montgomery were at first looked upon as a local phenomenon, growing out of the unique conditions and leadership in this particular town. Then, after six months, along came another bus boycott, this time in Tallahassee, Florida. Again, to the nation's amazement, this protest did not collapse, but instead gained more strength, support, and success.

By now, ten months later, enough time has elapsed to enable us to analyze and evaluate these developments, rather than merely describe them. What is the significance of the bus protest begun in Montgomery? Is it really only a local development, or does it contain the seeds of a Negro resistance movement which is likely to spread? To answer these questions, we must examine the factors which account for the occurrence of organized resistance in Montgomery, with an eye to determining whether the same factors are in operation in other communities throughout the South.

What is most apparent about Montgomery is that the Negro community, as a whole, was ready not only to stand up for its

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rights but to *organize* to attain them. This organization, this mass participation in protest activity, is the major new element in the Montgomery situation. But organized activity on a smaller scale is not new to the Montgomery Negro community. The groundwork for the present conscious, community-wide organization, has been laid by years and years of slow, plodding, day-to-day battles and activities against discrimination.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), though small, has been active in Montgomery for years. It has been a broad organization composed of both the middle- and working-class elements of the population. It is important to note this fact since an impression has prevailed that the NAACP in the North and South consists primarily of middle-class Negro intellectuals and professional people. This has not been true in Montgomery, on either the leadership or membership level. Among the most consistent and hard working leaders of the organization have been Mr. Robert L. Mathews, an insurance agent, Professor J. E. Pierce of the Alabama State Teachers' College, Mr. E. D. Nixon, president of the local Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and Mrs. Rosa Parks, a seamstress. Under their leadership, the state organization increased its membership from 400 to 2,000, and the callings of these members range from ministers, teachers, businessmen, and lawyers to domestic workers, janitors, and porters.

The NAACP in Montgomery has concerned itself primarily with educational and legal activities, holding numerous meetings, bringing in speakers, and providing legal support on civil rights issues. As an organization, it has not initiated popular campaigns to combat segregation. A number of such campaigns have been waged in Montgomery, however, largely under the leadership of Montgomery's leading Negro trade unionist, E. D. Nixon. As Ted Poston reported in his excellent series in the *New York Post,* "any long time Negro resident will tell you, 'Mr. Nixon has been fighting all these things so long that it's a wonder he's still living. He raised so much hell on so many fronts even some of our own people thought he was crazy.' "

In the New Deal days, when Montgomery Negroes were excluded from PWA and WPA jobs, Nixon initiated a campaign which eventually resulted in the opening of such employment to them. During the war, there was no Negro USO in Montgomery to service Negro soldiers stationed at a nearby field. Here again, Nixon took the initiative by protesting the situation to Mrs. Roosevelt. She turned his letter over to the head of wartime social agencies, and within three months, after a representative of the agency worked closely with Nixon and other members of the Negro community, a Negro USO was established in Montgomery.

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In 1944, after the Supreme Court ruled that Negroes have a right to vote in political party primaries, Nixon organized a Montgomery Voters Group to concentrate on registering the Negro citizens of Montgomery. Nixon attaches prime importance to political action, claiming that "there is nothing wrong with Montgomery that 10,000 votes won't cure." Apparently, this is what the rulers of Montgomery fear, for their Board of Registers has used every device conceivable to deny Negroes the vote. In the 1944 registration drive, out of the 5,000 Negroes who attempted to register, only 500 succeeded. Attorney Arthur Madison, a Montgomery Negro lawyer practicing in New York, was then sent for to represent a group of Negroes whom the Board failed to register. Under great pressure, three of the group, including a relative of Madison, turned on the lawyer, claiming that he represented them without their consent. Instead of resulting in gaining the vote for disenfranchised Negroes, the suit resulted in a $1,000 fine for Madison and his disbarment in Alabama. Such have been the pressures used against Negroes in Montgomery, and such are the campaigns they have waged in the face of these obstacles.

From these selected examples of organized Negro activity in Montgomery, several conclusions can be drawn. One is that economic development in the South, and the consequent emergence of Negro trade union leaders, is one of the key factors which is likely to contribute to the organizational development of the general Negro community. Certainly in Montgomery, Nixon has brought to the battle for Negro rights the organizational experience he has gained in fighting for workers' rights as local president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. In this capacity, Nixon has been in touch with the labor movement throughout the country, he knows his way around in big organizations and in the political world, he has come to conclusions about the kind of factional pitfalls to avoid and the kind of organizational approaches to encourage, and he has poured the benefits of his outside experience into the local movement for Negro rights. In the present boycott, he is playing a key role behind the scenes. Feeling against the buses had been high in Montgomery for a long time, and Nixon had been working with politically active women on some form of bus protest long before Mrs. Parks' arrest touched off the December 5th boycott. He declined offers to assume the leadership in the present protest, however, suggesting that a minister, and in particular, Reverend King, who was "new in the community, brilliant, cool, and unafraid," was best suited to lead and unite the Negro community. It can be assumed that Nixon is certainly not the only Negro trade union leader to have emerged in the South, but that in other communities there are others of his stature who have made, and will continue to make, an important contribution to their local battles for equal rights.

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A second conclusion to be drawn from the Montgomery story is that the highly organized and self-conscious movement taking place in the city's Negro community today could not possibly have occurred without a long series of previous efforts in the same direction. It was only after years and years of separate skirmishes, of defeats and occasional victories, in which the leaders and rank and file gained experience in organizing, and confidence in their own ability to stand up and fight, that the Negroes of Montogomery were able to reach this new stage, and as a whole to undertake united action. As noted earlier, this is where the chief significance of the Montgomery protest lies. It marks a new stage of development in the Negroes' battle against inequality, a qualitative change, if you will. From small sporadic campaigns, involving the participation of only a minority, it has taken on the proportion of a mass movement.

Ironically, Montgomery, in the past, had been considered a town with comparatively good race relations and its own Negro leaders considered the general Negro population inert and inactive on issues of civil rights. It is certainly not unique in having a history of some organized activity on the part of Negroes to attain their rights. Throughout the South, in small communities and large, the same kind of persevering work has gone on, unpublicized (except where murders or court cases followed), often unsuccessful, but nevertheless unabated. It can be deduced, therefore, that many other communities also are ready to reach the stage of united mass action. Each community, of course, has its own individual problems, and certainly the situation in large cities is much more complicated than in small towns. The degree of tension between the races is also a factor which varies and plays a role in determining the possibility and nature of organized mass action. Therefore, it should not be expected that Negroes are ready to participate in mass activities universally throughout the South, but it can probably be assumed, on the basis of Montgomery, that it is true in many Southern communities.

Past experience in organized activity is not the only factor, of course, which has made the Negroes of Montgomery, Tallahassee, and elsewhere ready to participate in an organized protest movement. Out of their local conflicts have come test cases, and in the great majority of instances, over the last ten to fifteen years, the higher courts have ruled in favor of desegregation. Negroes in the South have been greatly influenced by this whole series of rulings, and particularly by the sweeping decision on the desegregation of public schools. On the one hand, these rulings have given them a sense of strength. Not only right, but the law is on their side. On the other hand, they realize that the law will never be implemented in the South unless they themselves take action to enforce desegregation.

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Thus, with the higher courts on their side, they have a new sense of strength and determination.

Another factor which accounts for the birth of an organized movement in Montgomery is the caliber of its new leaders. In general, the Montgomery movement is an expression of what sociologists have termed "the New Negro," and the young preachers and lawyers, in particular, are examples of the New Negro on the leadership level. These are extremely young men, highly educated and dedicated, who have not only the zeal to champion their people, but the tools with which to do so. They have had greater educational opportunities open to them than their predecessors had, partly because increasing industrialization in the South has resulted in the use of more funds for Negro education during the past fifteen years. Moreover, more white colleges in the North and South have opened their doors to Negroes in recent years. Equally important, these young men were students at a time when the movement for racial equality was growing rapidly all over the world. Many of them also served in the armed forces where they gained a new perspective of themselves as American citizens entitled to rights as well as duties.

One gets the impression that the young preachers prepared themselves for the ministry with a determination to use their training to further their people's fight for final emancipation. Talk to Reverend King, for example, and you will hear him discuss the problems of Negroes and whites in Montgomery in terms of Kant, Hegel, Gandhi, and James. While in Montgomery, this correspondent had the opportunity of hearing not only Reverend King, but Reverend Abernathy and a relatively unknown pastor, Reverend French, address their mass-meeting congregation. One could hardly believe that these men, with responsibilities on their shoulders comparable to those of wartime statesmen, were merely in their late twenties or early thirties. Each of them obviously held the respect, confidence, and love of the assembled audience. Their intelligence, articulate communication, and responsibility far outweighed what they lacked in years. Their training and the times had prepared them to be effective leaders.

These, then, are some of the factors which account for the occurrence of organized resistance in Montgomery. To summarize briefly: conditions were ripe for such a movement because leaders and rank and file had been trained by past activity, because federal courts gave them confidence and support in their battle against segregation, and because new leaders with new skills, needed to sustain and service such a movement, have emerged. These developments are in part by-products of the economic development of the South. They are not peculiar to Montgomery alone, but are in evidence throughout the South today.

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WORLD EVENTS

By Scott Nearing

Internationalize Suez!

British and United States interests which helped to establish the revolutionary government of President Nasser as an independent bastion against the penetration of Communism into the Arab world found themselves, during the closing days of July, 1956, face to face with a "nationalized" Suez Canal.

"Nationalization," or, as it is usually called, "the right of eminent domain," is a well-established principle of sovereignty, under which any state may take over private property for public purposes. In Article 8 of her 1954 agreement with Egypt, the British government recognized the Suez Canal as "an integral part of Egypt" and therefore subject to Egypt's right of eminent domain.

First reactions to the nationalization of Suez by the Cairo government, particularly in France, were violent. Hotheads demanded the restoration of the Canal strip to its "rightful owners" (the shareholders of the Suez Canal Company) and proposed immediate military occupation of the area.

A hurry-up London meeting of British and French policy makers, attended in its closing hours by spokesmen flown in from Washington, decided to call a conference of the twenty-four nations most concerned with the use of the Suez Canal, including the Soviet Union and Egypt. The purpose of the conference was to "internationalize" the canal.

Not a bad idea!

There are several waterways beside Suez of great strategic value to many nations: the Dardenelles, Gibraltar, Panama, the Straits of Malacca. Common sense and ordinary foresight would suggest (1) the establishment (preferably by the United Nations) of an International Waterways Authority; (2) assignment (by the United Nations) to this Authority, of administrative control over waterways designated as international; (3) provision, by the IWA, for the maintenance of the waterway and for control and supervision of its traffic. From a long-range point of view, the International Waterways Authority would be a division or department of the World Economic Authority, charged by the United Nations with the supervision, con-

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trol, and use of those economic areas such as natural resources, means of transportation and communication, credits and foreign exchange, and migration, which are vital to the welfare of several nations.

Why By-Pass the United Nations?

Suez presents the big powers with another opportunity to strengthen the United Nations by using it in an emergency. Instead, a conference of interested nations has been called, outside the sphere of the UN.

An institution like the United Nations grows with use and atrophies through neglect. If "equal justice under law" is to become an axiom of international politics, those who stand for justice under world law should take advantage of every opportunity to use the UN apparatus as an agency through which international problems are channeled. Structure develops with function. The United Nations will grow into an authority competent to mete out even-handed justice to the nations and peoples of the planet only insofar as it is called upon to deal with situations like that arising out of the nationalization of the Suez Canal.

One Horrible Example

Lewis Mumford notes that the Greeks paid little attention to the "barbarians" of the outer circle, or to the slaves and farmhands who did much of the heavy work at home. The Greek sphere of interest was limited to Greece and its immediate surroundings, and inside the home front to the comparatively small proportion of the population which enjoyed the privileges of "citizenship." Plato failed to regenerate his own culture, or even to offer an ideological basis for its renewal. "What undermined him, what undermined the Greeks, was their failure to embrace humanity: their failure to be concerned with the whole life of man and with every member of human society, to address the soldier, the sailor, the craftsman, the farmer, and to give hope and faith to the common man in every region. Plato's message was addressed solely to his class and his culture. It called for a radical re-orientation to life, and yet it left the chief sacred cows of his world, slavery and class rule, contentedly chewing their cud." (*The Condition of Man,* 1944, p. 32.)

Following this argument, every emphasis on class, race, locality, or nation, at the expense of the total human family is an invitation to disaster. America-firsters, white supremacists, business monopolists, and conveners of special vigilante or extra-legal conferences to meet the crises which develop periodically between the nations, please take notice.

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Brave, Free World!

From a retired New York manufacturer comes a letter singing the praises of the American Way, with its "highest standard of living on earth" and reprimanding us for questioning its worth, vitality, and integrity. The same mail brought a request from a Philadelphia book store for three clothbound copies of *USA Today,* on consignment, with this footnote: "We sell practically no political books these days." A good friend who has made the rounds of the book stores in downtown Chicago reports that the buyers like *USA Today* and would display it, but "they are reluctant to carry books on economics and related subjects because such matters are suspect, and a great number of people hesitate to buy them since discussion is more or less taboo on controversial subjects." Our correspondent adds: "Only text books on social science are in demand." So six booksellers in the Chicago Loop liked *USA Today* but decided that it was safer not to stock it.

A middle-aged woman who has been associated all her life with "causes" more or less on the Left, writes us: "I am not a member of anything now except the Woman's International League for Peace. Very soon I will quit that too." In order to live in the United States with a minimum of discomfort, she has decided to disassociate and decontaminate herself.

One of the progressive sympathizers who subscribed to *World Events* while it was still a separate publication, writes us regretting the need to sever relations: "I decided not to be interested anymore in political affairs. I am foreign born and any thought, idea, and even remark is understood detrimentally. People are becoming very touchy. Thank you for sending me the notice, but I do not go to any lectures of a political nature."

Law enforcement agencies have not laid hands on these progressive-minded citizens. But the climate of opinion, induced by the ceaseless official and unofficial propaganda of the past decade, supplemented by savage attacks on the Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born and all other agencies or organizations which hold ideas that threaten the stability of the Big Business Oligarchy, make it imperative for dissidents to keep quiet and stay out of sight.

Twenty years ago such situations, in metropolitan centers like New York and Chicago, would have been quite out of the ordinary. Since 1946, they have become commonplace. (See Corliss Lamont's new book *Freedom Is As Freedom Does,* Horizon Press, 220 West 42 St., New York, $3.95.) Add to them the thousands who have lost their jobs as teachers and public and private employees because they spoke their minds, the ubiquitous, ever-present secret police, the volunteer snoopers and collectors of neighborhood gossip, hired in-

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formers, the long list of "subversive" organizations published by the federal Justice Department, the Smith Act under which people go to the penitentiary for holding and expressing the wrong political ideas, the federal and state legislative witch hunts, and the flood of exaggeration, smear, half-truth and misinformation which innundates the country through newspapers and magazines and over radio and television, and you have a frightening picture of a trend which threatens to become a fascist tidal wave.

Farewell to Private Enterprise

Britain's liberal weekly *The New Statesman & Nation* begins its lead editorial of July 7, 1956, with this brief but portentous summary of the plight of the British auto industry:

> The crisis in the motor car industry is the product, not of the new industrial revolution, but of the old. The 6,000 men peremptorally sacked last week are not the victims of the age of automation, but of a good old-fashioned crisis of over production. It is a familiar picture: exports shrinking, home sales falling, stocks piling up. . . . It marks the end of a postwar attempt to prove that full employment and Tory freedom are compatible.

This description, word for word, describes the predicament of auto production and sales in the United States. The auto industry is new—a product of the past forty years. It is equipped with the latest manufacturing and selling devices. It is huge in size and has been immensely profitable, but it suffers from a deadly degenerative disease—overexpansion. It has made and reinvested so much profit that its capacity to produce far exceeds the available market.

Nor does the auto industry stand alone in this regard. Producers of such novelties as air-conditioning equipment and television sets face the same dilemma. No sooner is a new industry opened up than the big producers rush in, overexpand, overproduce, and pile up surplus stocks.

The New Statesman & Nation has put its finger on a vital truth: full employment and private enterprise do not go long together, even when supported by credit inflation and subsidized by a huge program of government spending for arms production and highway construction.

Rough and Ready

Napoleon, Hitler, and Stalin were rough, ruthless upstarts, highly unpopular in some quarters, but all were masters and shapers of world events during periods of social storm and stress.

Napoleon played a leading part in wrecking European feudalism,

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and clearing the way for the tawdry, 19th century world domination of finance capitalism.

Hitler rose dizzily to power and in less than a decade was hacking away at the drab, ramshackle, hit-or-miss, crazy structure of 20th-century European capitalism, and thus opening the door for the designers and constructors of a collective world.

Stalin devoted the first half of a long life to undermining capitalism and the second half to building socialism in one country.

All three men were rough, ready, and prominent actors in the hurly-burly, intrigue, and violence of a rapidly changing culture pattern. All three possessed the activist qualities which drive men into positions of leadership during periods of disorder, turmoil, social decay, uncertainty, and insecurity. Their supporters, followers and worshipers are the adventurous, the disinherited, and that large segment of every society which, for various and conflicting reasons, desires to suppress the past.

Need for Straight Thinking

Among the devices employed in brain-washing the people of the United States, the "either-or" dilemma holds a high place. Either-or logic is linked with geographical, cultural, and ideological comparisons: "native" or "foreign"; "civilized" or "savage"; "Christian" or "heathen"; "the free world" or "the iron-curtain countries."

This "either-or" technique was employed by Secretary of State Dulles on June 21, 1956, in an address to the Kiwanis International in San Francisco. "It is, of course, nothing new that despotism and freedom should be combating each other. That has been going on since the dawn of history. The forces of despotism are more highly organized than ever before. . . . So far their gains have come through violence or the threat of violence."

At no period in its history has the United States been a White Knight in shining armor. Europeans who migrated to North America to escape the injustices of a landed aristocracy, grabbed land from the natives, plundered them and murdered them. The colonists established a system of indentured servants, a lucrative slave trade, and a vast domain founded on chattel slavery. While they wrote in the Declaration of Independence that all men are created free and equal, the Founding Fathers traded in slaves, owned slaves, and proclaimed that "there is no good Indian but a dead Indian."

During the long and bitter war of white invaders and aggressors against red natives and defenders, English-speaking whites established their supremacy by burning out and killing their French, Spanish, and Dutch rivals.

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From 1776 to 1783 and from 1812 to 1815 the Founding Fathers of the United States won and preserved their independence by force of arms, with the active support of French and other armed forces.

Between 1846 and 1848, the Washington government waged war against Mexico, seized what is now Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California, and annexed them to the United States.

Washington established its supremacy in Europe, North Africa, and the Near East by sending millions of armed men across the Atlantic in 1917-1918 and in 1941-1945. It clinched control of the Pacific by crossing that ocean in 1898 (the war with Spain), 1941-1945 (the war with Japan), and 1950-1952 (the war against North Korea), seizing, occupying, and fortifying strategic bases up to and including the mainland of Asia (the military occupation of South Korea). Though stridently advocating freedom, the United States has built up the world's most extensive and intensive system of unearned income based on wage slavery. During the past two decades, while paying lip-service to peace, Washington has spent the greater part of its revenues for arms, and is presently maintaining the earth's most powerful apparatus for violence—the army, navy, and air force of the United States.

Mr. Dulles is one of the authors of the doctrine of massive retaliation by force and violence directed against the "enemies" of the United States, and one of the chief instigators of such military alliances as NATO, SEATO, and the Association of American States, all prepared and committed to the use of force and violence for the defense and promotion of their national interests.

The Dulles "either-or" is a sham and a delusion, falsified by history and reduced to absurdity by current experience. The United States, with its record of "violence and the threat of violence" and its current development and accumulation of unprecedented agencies of violence, is by the Dulles definition one of the most formidable despotisms of all time.

Contemporary political thought clings to the false idea that economic life is some sort of game, in which some must always lose in order that others may win. The struggle for prosperity will have to begin by clearing up that misconception; the science of economics must become an instrument for the balanced distribution of the good things of the earth, so that it will never again be defined as "the science of human misery."

—Josué de Castro, *The Geography of Hunger*

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Here's What They Say . . .

"THE EMPIRE OF OIL"

by

Harvey O'Connor

This survey of the American oil industry, with briefer treatment of the oil industry in the rest of the world, is written in the radical tradition that is now so out of fashion in the United States. It contains a great deal of information in highly readable form. The general approach and the slashing style are similar to, say, Matthew Josephson's *Robber Barons.* It is well-informed, hard-hitting journalism, for the most part, rather than economic analysis in the academic sense. A good many statistical data are scattered through the text, but they are mostly used for purposes of illustration rather than submitted to systematic analysis. Granted the sort of book the author set out to write, the job has been very well done. And with this industry, more perhaps than with any other, there is surely room for such an approach as that which Mr. O'Connor has chosen—an approach which places the emphasis less on the purely economic issues and more on questions of power and politics.

—*The Economic Journal* (June 1956), organ of the Royal Economic Society, foremost publication of the economic profession.

"WAS JUSTICE DONE?"

by

Malcolm Sharp

. . . This book, by a trained lawyer and professor of the Law School of the University of Chicago, presents the most cogent argument that has yet appeared for the view that the Rosenbergs were innocent of the crime charged. The analysis of the testimony and its setting is scrupulous and fair. Professor Sharp eschews what he calls the "defects of enthusiasm." He does not fail to take account of the weaknesses as well as of the strong points of the case, and he neither blinks at nor exaggerates anything. Though it is obvious that his feelings are deeply engaged, the reader will have no doubt that they derive primarily from his concern for the integrity of justice in our country. . . . The book is not pleasant reading, but Professor Sharp's clarity and honesty of treatment make the reading easy and absorbing. And his courage and determination to vindicate our intelligence and humanity is a bracing experience.

—The *Nation,* August 11, 1956.

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One of General Stillwell's last private acts in China, in October 1944, was to send Chu Teh his lined jacket. Eighteen months later, Stillwell wrote, ". . . It makes me itch to get over there and shoulder a rifle with Chu Teh."

* * *

The *Great Road* will be published on October 15, but books will be distributed in September. By ordering now, you will get your copy as soon as it comes off the press and save considerable money.

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(continued from inside back cover)

Sharp's *Was Justice Done?* which appeared in *The Nation* of August 11. Several other reviews of this important work have now appeared, and we are hoping that it will soon begin to get the attention and discussion it so richly deserves. Here again, MR readers can perform a most valuable service as publicity agents and salesmen—not in the interests of private profit but in the interests of even-handed justice.

In reporting on our publishing activities, we have saved for last the book about which we are currently most steamed up, Agnes Smedley's *The Great Road: The Life and Times of Chu Teh*. Chu is a very remarkable man, and this is a very remarkable book. Read the ad on page 175 and see if you aren't convinced. And then get out your checkbook and take advantage of our pre-publication offer. When we say that this is only valid to the date of publication (October 15), we mean exactly that. After that date, the price will go up to $6.75, and the combination with a sub to MR will go up to $9.

And while we are on this subject, we are sorry to have to say that because of rising costs the combination offers for a sub with either *The Present as History* or *The Empire of Oil* will soon have to be raised from $6 to $7. Moral—Buy Now!

The following are among the editorials and articles which will appear in early issues of MR: an analysis of the Suez Canal problem by the editors; the address on Marxian Socialism which Paul Sweezy gave at the University of New Hampshire last May (many requests for this have come in); a report on recent developments by our China expert; and an analysis of the interrelations between technology and militarism by an economics professor.

All subscribers will soon receive a letter from Monthly Review Associates, along with MRA's annual appeal for funds. It will discuss some of our plans for the future, including one big surprise which we think will be wholeheartedly welcomed by all of you. Look for the letter—and get ready to respond to the appeal more generously than ever. Now is the time for the American socialist movement to experience a real renaissance, and with your support we believe MR can play an important part in seeing that it does.

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(*continued from inside front cover*)

(1) to help educate your friends about the meaning of events in post-Stalin Russia, and (2) to extend the circulation of MR at a time when this country needs to hear the voice of socialist reason as never before? Prices for the complete issue are 50 cents a single copy and $2 for five; for the galleys, $1 for ten, $2 for twenty-five.

The article in this issue by Aleine Austin entitled "Behind the Montgomery Bus Boycott" continues MR's effort to probe beneath the surface of the desegregation struggle which is now perhaps the most important issue in domestic politics. We are planning future articles in the race-relations field and would appreciate any suggestions that readers may care to make. Meanwhile, we urge you to buy and distribute as widely as you can the latest MR pamphlet, *On Segregation*. For details of contents, price, and so on, see page 153.

Since our last issue went to press, we have received a letter from David McReynolds of the Socialist Party which reads in part: "In the May issue of MR you published a letter from Art Sharon of the Socialist Workers Party in which he urged support for the SWP in the 1956 elections. In the fourth paragraph . . . he eliminated the Socialist Party from consideration by saying we supported the Democratic Party candidates and 'consequently no slate of the Socialist Party will appear on the ballot.' Fortunately for the socialist movement, Mr. Sharon is very wrong. We do not support and will not vote for the Democratic candidates in November. . . . The SP is running Darlington Hoopes and Samuel Friedman as a national ticket and it is to be hoped that all those concerned with a world where men can live in peace and abide in freedom will give their full support to this ticket. . . .

"The Socialist Party urges that its candidates be written in where they do not appear on the ballot." We are glad to correct the wrong impression given by Mr. Sharon's letter and to help get this information to American socialists before Election Day.

Cyrus Sulzberger writes in his "Foreign Affairs" column in the *New York Times* (August 13):

> Oil is at the root both of the present Suez crisis and the West's particular concern with the Middle East. Must we eventually recognize that what our petroleum companies do in that area is a matter of governmental interest? Should they be controlled by Washington even though they remain privately financed and operated?

How many Americans have the necessary knowledge and information to give a confident answer to these questions? Very few, we venture to guess. But we know very well where they can *get* the necessary knowledge and information, and that is from Harvey O'Connor's book *The Empire of Oil* which is incomparably the best-informed and most comprehensive work on the whole oil problem to appear in many a year. We are proud to have published *The Empire of Oil* just when it is most needed, and we have no hesitation in urging you to redouble your efforts to see that it is known and bought by libraries and individuals all over the country. For the authoritative *Economic Journal's* evaluation of *The Empire of Oil* (and also for the price of the book alone and in combination with a sub to MR), turn to page 174. The book, incidentally, is rapidly becoming famous the world over. A Spanish translation has already appeared in Mexico and is selling very well. An English edition is on the press. The Japanese translation is due for publication in October. And a German edition is now in the negotiation stage.

Also on page 174, we print extracts from a 2-page review of Malcolm

(*Continued on Page* 176)

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